

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-3. (Cancelled).

4. (Previously Presented) A control apparatus for input screens that is installed in a vehicle, comprising:

screen controller that causes display device to display information including a plurality of dummy switches and changing the information displayed by the display device to information corresponding to the operated dummy switch; and

operation nullification device that nullifies operation of the dummy switch upon fulfillment of a predetermined traveling condition related to operation of the vehicle and prohibits information displayed by the display device from being changed based on the operation to prevent unsafe operation while the vehicle is traveling,

wherein the operation nullification device is constructed to judge whether or not the predetermined condition has been fulfilled, depending on the number of dummy switches included in information displayed by the display device.

5. (Original) The control apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising:

operation nullification canceller that cancels nullification of operation of the dummy switch if a predetermined time period has elapsed since the start of nullification of the operation by the operation nullification device.

6. (Original) The control apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising:

operation nullification canceller that cancels nullification of the operation of the dummy switch by the operation nullification device if the vehicle has stopped.

7. (Previously Presented) The control apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising:

first operation device for performing the predetermined operation based on a first action made by the operator; and

second operation device for performing the predetermined operation based on a second action made by the operator, the second action being different from the first action,

wherein the operation nullification device is constructed to judge whether or not the predetermined traveling condition has been fulfilled, depending on whether the predetermined operation is performed by the first operation device or by the second operation device.

8. (Previously Presented) A control apparatus for input screens that is installed in a vehicle and constructed to cause display device to display information including a plurality of dummy switches and cause the display device to display new information corresponding to one of the dummy switches that has selectively been operated, comprising:

summation time period calculator that estimates a time period required for an operator to watch the displayed information to selectively operate one of the dummy switches included in the displayed information during a period from the start to the stop of the vehicle, estimates a time period required for the operator to watch newly displayed information to selectively operate one of a plurality of dummy switches included in the newly displayed information, and calculates a sum of the estimated time periods; and

operation nullification device that nullifies operation performed by the operator for selection of one of a plurality of dummy switches included in the newly displayed information if the summation time period during a traveling condition is longer than a reference time period, and prohibits new information corresponding to the operated dummy switch from being displayed by the display device to prevent unsafe operation while the vehicle is traveling.

9. (Original) The control apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising:

operation nullification canceller that cancels nullification of operation of the dummy switch if a predetermined time period has elapsed since the start of nullification of the operation by the operation nullification device.

10. (Original) The control apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising:
operation nullification canceller that cancels nullification of operation of the dummy switch by the operation nullification device if the vehicle has stopped.

11. (Original) The control apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising:
operation nullification canceller that cancels nullification of operation of the dummy switch by the operation nullification device if a predetermined time period has elapsed since the start of the nullification or if the vehicle has stopped.

12. (Original) The control apparatus according to claim 8, wherein:
the summation time period calculator is constructed to calculate the summation time period for information that is displayed after cancel of nullification of the operation.

13. (Original) The control apparatus according to claim 8, wherein:
the summation time period calculator is constructed to estimate a time period required to watch the displayed information, depending on the number of the dummy switches included in the information.

14. (Original) The control apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising:
first operation device for performing operation of the dummy switch based on a first action made by the operator; and
second operation device for performing operation of the dummy switch based on a second action made by the operator, the second action being different from the first action,

wherein the summation time period calculator is constructed to estimate a time period required to watch the information, depending on whether the operation of the dummy switch is performed by the first operation device or by the second operation device.

15. (Canceled).

16. (Previously Presented) A control apparatus for input screens that is installed in a vehicle, comprising:

screen control means for causing display device to display information including a plurality of dummy switches and changing the information displayed by the display device to information corresponding to the operated dummy switch; and

operation nullification means for nullifying operation of the dummy switch upon fulfillment of a predetermined traveling condition related to operation of the vehicle and prohibiting information displayed by the display device from being changed based on the operation to prevent unsafe operation while the vehicle is traveling,

wherein the operation nullification means is constructed to judge whether or not the predetermined condition has been fulfilled, depending on the number of dummy switches included in information displayed by the display device.

17. (Previously Presented) A control apparatus for input screens that is installed in a vehicle and constructed to cause display device to display information including a plurality of dummy switches and cause the display device to display new information corresponding to one of the dummy switches that has selectively been operated, comprising:

summation time period calculation means for estimating a time period required for an operator to watch the displayed information to selectively operate one of the dummy switches included in the displayed information during a period from the start to the stop of the vehicle, estimating a time period required for the operator to watch newly displayed

information to selectively operate one of a plurality of dummy switches included in the newly displayed information, and calculating a sum of the estimated time periods; and

operation nullification means for nullifying operation performed by the operator for selection of one of a plurality of dummy switches included in the newly displayed information if the summation time period during a traveling condition is longer than a reference time period, and prohibiting new information corresponding to the operated dummy switch from being displayed by the display device to prevent unsafe operation while the vehicle is traveling.

18. (Canceled).

19. (Previously Presented) A control method for input screens that is installed in a vehicle, comprising the steps of:

causing display device to display information including a plurality of dummy switches and changing the information displayed by the display device to information corresponding to the operated dummy switch;

judging whether or not a predetermined traveling condition related to operation of the vehicle has been fulfilled, depending on the number of dummy switches included in information displayed by the display device to prevent unsafe operation while the vehicle is traveling; and

nullifying operation of the dummy switch upon fulfillment of a predetermined condition and prohibiting information displayed by the display device from being changed based on the operation.

20. (Previously Presented) A control method for input screens that is installed in a vehicle and constructed to cause display device to display information including a plurality of dummy switches and cause the display device to display new information corresponding to one of the dummy switches that has selectively been operated, comprising the steps of:

estimating a time period required for an operator to watch the displayed information to selectively operate one of the dummy switches included in the displayed information during a period from the start to the stop of the vehicle;

estimating a time period required for the operator to watch newly displayed information to selectively operate one of a plurality of dummy switches included in the newly displayed information;

calculating a sum of the estimated time periods; and

nullifying operation performed by the operator for selection of one of a plurality of dummy switches included in the newly displayed information if the summation time period during a traveling condition is longer than a reference time period, and prohibiting new information corresponding to the operated dummy switch from being displayed by the display device to prevent unsafe operation while the vehicle is traveling.